

Route 611 Water Project

Service Commencement for Route 611 Water Project

Dickenson County, Virginia

April 11, 2005

Today I am pleased to join with Dickenson County residents in celebrating the commencement of new public water service for the communities of Bear Pen Creek, Cutter Creek and Pine Creek. This project represents another significant success in our ongoing work to bring clean drinking water to all Southwest Virginia homes.

Beginning today, 260 homes, two businesses and three churches in Dickenson County will for the first time receive publicly provided drinking water. Previously, residents in the Bear Pen Creek, Cutter Creek and Pine Creek communities have had no choice other than to rely on private wells and springs for their drinking water, many of which were often insufficient and did not provide an adequate water supply.

This project was supported with more than \$3.5 million in federal monies from several federal agencies. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, provided a total of \$2,244,800 for this project. Of that amount, \$1,683,600 has been awarded as a federal grant, and \$561,200 has been supplied in the form of a low-interest federal loan. In addition, the Appalachian Regional Commission has provided \$500,000 . A federal Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$1,000,000 was also awarded and has been administered by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Dickenson County has provided a local match of \$10,000 to complete the funding package .

The water development project has required the installation of more than 23 and one-half miles of water lines in the Bear Pen Creek, Cutter Creek and Pine Creek communities. One pump station, six pressure reducing valves and a 200,000-gallon water storage tank have also been installed in the service area.

The new public water service which will now be provided to the residences and businesses of Bear Pen Creek, Cutter Creek and Pine Creek is an outstanding example of the combined efforts of federal, state and local officials to establish safe and clean public drinking water for our region's residents.

Approximately 20 years ago, only 40 percent of Dickenson County residents had access to publicly provided drinking water. Since that time, we have actively worked to obtain millions in federal funding to establish new water systems in Dickenson County, including \$32 million in the past 10 years alone. Today, everyone here can proudly acknowledge that this work on the part of many people has born fruit. Today, 79 percent of all Dickenson County homes have access to publicly funded water systems, and that percentage will increase to 85 percent in the near future as major water projects in the Lick Creek and Lick Fork communities near completion and as major upgrades are performed on the Big Caney

water system.

The remarkable statistics that I have just shared with you represent an outstanding success for our region, and there are several individuals who deserve recognition for their cooperation and dedication to the water related needs of Dickenson County residents.

Scott Moore, Chairman of the Dickenson County Board of Supervisors; Paul Buchanan, Member of the Board representing the Clintwood District; Scott Stanley, Member of the Board representing the Willis District; and other Members of the Board deserve our thanks for their leadership in the effort to bring public drinking water to the residents of Bear Pen Creek, Cutter Creek and Pine Creek.

I also want to thank Damon Rasnick, Chairman of the Dickenson County Public Service Authority; Ron Phillips, Executive Director of the PSA; and the excellent staff at the PSA. Without these dedicated individuals, we would not be celebrating the outstanding strides Dickenson County is making in infrastructure development .

I also want to recognize Keith Viers, Dickenson County Administrator, and Leman Kendrick, County Engineer, for their effective work in aid of this project.

Jimmy Blane Mullins also deserves our thanks this morning for his voluntary and very capable assistance in jump starting the project.

Finally, I want to thank my District Administrator, Laura Lee, and my new Project Manager, Courtney Lamie, for their persistent and persuasive work in achieving this success. Their outstanding work has substantially contributed to the success that we celebrate today.

Today's ceremony is an example of what can be achieved when citizens and government officials at the local, state and federal levels work together in aid of a common purpose. For that cooperation and successful work in providing for clean and safe public drinking water for the residents of Bear Pen Creek, Cutter Creek and Pine Creek, I want to commend everyone here and offer special congratulations to the residents and business owners who will be receiving this vital new service.